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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Gerald Osborn Honored for 65-Year Contribution
To Volunteer Weather Observer Program**

Recognizing more than six decades of dedication, NOAA's National Weather Service has named Gerald Osborn, of Ainsworth, Nebraska, a recipient of the agency's Gen. Albert J. Meyer Award for 65 years of outstanding service in the Cooperative Weather Observer Program. The award is named for Gen. Albert Meyer, an Eagle Pass, Texas, observer who was appointed director of the U.S. Army Signal Corps in 1870 by President Ulysses S. Grant and directed to establish "the Division of Telegrams and Reports for the Benefit of Commerce" that became the National Weather Service.

"Cooperative observers are the bedrock of weather data collection and analysis," said Brian Hirsch, meteorologist in charge of NOAA's North Platte, Neb., National Weather Service office. "Satellites, high speed computers, mathematical models and other technological breakthroughs have brought great benefits to the Nation in terms of better forecasts and warnings. But without the century-long accumulation of accurate weather observations taken by volunteer observers, scientists could not begin to adequately describe the climate of the United States. We cannot thank Mr. Gerald Osborn enough, for his many years of service to America."

Brian Hirsch will present the award to Gerald Osborn, during a ceremony to be held beginning at 1200 p.m. at the Senior Center in Ainsworth, Nebraska.

Gerry Osborn assumed the duties of National Weather Service Cooperative Weather Observer beginning on October 1, 1946, reporting temperature, precipitation, snowfall and snow depth information daily to the National Weather Service.

The National Weather Service's Cooperative Weather Observer Program has given scientists and researchers continuous observational data since the program's inception more than a century ago. Today, more than 11,700 volunteer observers participate in the nationwide program to provide daily reports on temperature, precipitation and other weather factors such as snow depth, river levels and soil temperature.

Weather records retain their importance as time goes by. Long and continuous records provide an accurate picture of a locale's normal weather, and give climatologists and others a basis for predicting future trends. These data are invaluable for scientists studying floods, droughts and heat and cold waves. At the end of each month, observers mail their records to the National Climatic Data Center (NCDC) for publication in "Climatological Data" or "Hourly Precipitation Data."

The first extensive network of cooperative stations was set up in the 1890s as a result of an 1890 act of Congress that established the U.S. Weather Bureau. Many of the stations have even longer histories. John Campanius Holm's weather records, taken

without benefit of weather instruments in what is now Wilmington, Del., in 1644 and 1645, are the earliest known recorded observations in the United States. Many other historic figures have also maintained weather records, including Benjamin Franklin, George Washington and Thomas Jefferson. Jefferson maintained an almost unbroken record of weather observations between 1776 and 1816, and Washington took weather observations just a few days before he died. Several awards for accomplishments and length of service in the cooperative observer program are named for such pioneers of weather observations.

NOAA's mission is to understand and predict changes in the Earth's environment, from the depths of the ocean to the surface of the sun, and to conserve and manage our coastal and marine resources. Visit us on Facebook.

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On the Web:

NWS Cooperative Observer Program: <http://www.nws.noaa.gov/om/coop/index.htm>